

These are written by American authors and usually express some artistic quality--an expression of life, truth, and beauty. It is a classic that stands the test of time, is usually considered to be a representation of the period in which it was written, and merits lasting recognition.

Agee, James **A Death in the Family**  
This deeply poignant yet unsentimental account of what happens to his wife and six-year-old son when Jay Follet fails to return from a late night drive, won the Pulitzer Prize upon its posthumous publication.

Cather, Willa **My Antonia**  
Antonia, the spirited daughter of a Bohemian immigrant family, is determined to tame the Nebraska farmland in this poignant tale set in the late 19th century.

Cooper, James Fenimore **The Last of the Mohicans**  
In this sweeping 1826 adventure, Natty Bumpo prefers the honorable code of the Indians to the degraded behavior of his white fellows during the French and Indian War.

Crane, Stephen **The Red Badge of Courage**  
Young Henry Fleming joins the Union Army to seek glory and fight the rebels, and winds up searching for courage and battling his own rebellious conscience as it recoils at the horrors of war.

### Dreiser, Theodore **An American Tragedy**

Ambitious young Midwesterner Clyde Griffiths grabs for the golden ring, but his reach exceeds his grasp and his American dream becomes a nightmare of murder and depravity.

Ellison, Ralph **Invisible Man**  
During the 1950's a young nameless black man finds himself rendered invisible as he moves through levels of American intolerance.

Faulkner, William **Light in August**  
This is the intense and lyrical story of Lena Grove, a force of nature looking for the man who got her with child, and Joe Christmas, a lost man seeking the dreaded secret of his own racial identity

Fitzgerald, F. Scott **The Great Gatsby**  
At the height of the Jazz Age, Jay Gatsby pulls himself up by the bootstraps to achieve the kind of idyllic life that only money can buy, all for the love of Daisy Buchanan, who is not for sale.

Ferber, Edna **So Big**  
The daughter of a Chicago gambler, Selina Peake DeJong struggles to make a living for herself and her only child, "so big," in this inspiring story of a journey through life.

Hemingway, Ernest **The Sun Also Rises**  
Sultry temptress Lady Brett Ashley, her drunk fiancé, and smitten war veteran Jake Barnes, are among a group of expatriates who leave Paris to see the

bullfights of Pamplona, Spain in the 1920's.

Hurston, Zora Neale **Their Eyes Were Watching God**  
Janie Crawford, a sassy and self-confident African American woman of the 1930's, lives life on her own terms and goes through three marriages, one murder trial, and more joy and pain than many who judge her.

Kerouac, Jack **On the Road**  
In this groundbreaking novel, a group of Ivy-league educated young men break off from the mainstream, hitchhiking across 1950's America in a mad bohemian adventure of irreverent revelry.

Kesey, Ken **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**  
Chief Broom, a deaf-mute Indian kept in an Oregon mental hospital, tells the story of Randle McMurphy's battle of wills with the sadistic Big Nurse Ratched, a struggle between two varieties of madness.

Lee, Harper **To Kill a Mockingbird**  
A 1930's Southern town grapples with issues of race and justice in this story told from the eyes of Scout, a precocious tomboy whose lawyer father is defending a black man accused of rape.

Lewis, Sinclair **Babbitt**  
In this bracing social satire of pre-Depression middle-class America, George Babbitt searches for success in the business world, while putting his

little town of Zenith, Ohio - the Zip City  
- on the map.

London, Jack **White Fang**

In this adventure set in the Klondike Gold Rush, White Fang, a dog-wolf mix, has only experienced great cruelty from man and nature until he meets a master who shows him the great law of men and beasts.

Melville, Herman **Moby Dick**

Fanatic Captain Ahab forces the whaling vessel Pequod and its crew to join his obsessive and vengeful search for the elusive Moby Dick, a ghastly leviathan that stole his leg and haunts his dreams.

Miller, Henry **Tropic of Cancer**

This notorious and revolutionary novel is so raw, unabashed and unsparing in its depiction of the bohemian underworld of 1930's Paris that it was banned in the U.S. for 30 years.

Percy, Walker **The Moviegoer**

Thirty-year-old Binx Bolling is a dapper Bourbon Street man who spends his time carousing with secretaries and going to movies in this wry and romantic classic of one man's search for meaning.

Salinger, J.D. **The Catcher in the Rye**

Spend a few days playing hooky in the City with Holden Caulfield, a wry and skeptical sixteen-year-old who can't quite get used to the crummy fact that growing up means becoming a complete and total phony.

Steinbeck, John **The Grapes of Wrath**

The Joads, Oklahoma tenant farmers whose farm has been blown away, struggle westward towards the promised land of California on a road freighted with human misery and the imperishable will to survive.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher **Uncle Tom's Cabin**

This wildly popular novel that helped bring about the Abolition of slavery and the Civil War depicts the plight of Eliza, fleeing North with her son, and Tom, sold down the river to die in shameful fetters.

Twain, Mark **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**

Float down the Mississippi River with Huck and runaway slave Jim in this free-wheeling odyssey, part coming-of-age adventure and part sly satire of the senselessness of slavery.

Vonnegut, Kurt **Slaughterhouse-Five**

While on exhibit on the planet of Tralfamadore, Billy Pilgrim, American soldier and witness to the bombing of Dresden, revisits his memories of the past and the horrors of war.

Wharton, Edith **The Age of Innocence**

In this sparkling social novel set in the stiff upper crust of 19th Century New York, Newland Archer is distracted from his proper fiancée May by the her mysterious and vivacious cousin, the Countess Olenska.

# American Classics Fiction



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